The Manx

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in, J E Cole (ed) *Ethnic Groups of Europe: An Encyclopedia*, ABC-Clio Publishers, 2011.

Ethnically speaking, the term *Manx* relates to people with a familial tie to the Isle of Man, an island in the Irish Sea (British Isles) lying almost equidistant from its neighbours. Of the growing population of 82 000 (2006), less than 50% are Island born. The latter are British citizens (the Isle of Man is a British Crown Dependency), but the Island is not part of the UK. The primary language is English, although *Manx Gaelic* is spoken by a growing minority and Manx Gaelic-medium schooling is available. The official religion is Church of England, but Nonconformism is also spiritually and culturally significant. A diasporic community exists (e.g. in the US, Australia), and links are actively maintained.

The Island's Celtic pre-history is evidenced by visible archaeology in the landscape. By the 11th century the Isle of Man was under the rule of Norse kings, as part of the Kingdom of Mann and the Isles. In 1266 it was ceded to Scotland, and then in 1289 came under English control. Granted by the Crown to English nobles who became 'Lords of Mann', it remained independent until revested in the British Crown in 1765. Despite these changes, the Island's parliament, the *Tynwald Court*, survived. Said to be the world's longest continuous parliament, today *Tynwald* is both a symbol of the Island's Norse heritage and of the fact that it is, again, largely self-governing and independent.

Celtic roots are evident in the Manx Gaelic language, and in typical Manx surnames such as Kewley and Quayle, the K or Q sound being what remains of the Gaelic *mac* (son of). Norse/Celtic duality continues to colour the Island's political and cultural life, but the last few decades have also seen a rapid influx of workers for the international finance sector on which the economy now largely depends. Due to its position geographically, politically and fiscally vis-à-vis its neighbours, the Isle of Man has always absorbed settlers (known colloquially as *comeovers*) who have, in time, become Manx, but this latest and dramatic influx resulted instead in ethnic tension.

That tension was expressed through direct protest in the early 1970s and late 1980s. However, it also prompted a grassroots revival of cultural expression that has prevailed: examples include *Yn Cruinnaght*, the Island's annual inter-Celtic festival, and a reinvigoration of the Fair that accompanies the annual open-air sitting of *Tynwald* (5th July). The *Manx Heritage Foundation* (established 1982) supports the growing interest in the Island's Gaelic language, and its music, dance and poetic traditions. *Manx National Heritage*, a government department, has guardianship of the nation's natural and tangible heritage, and archives. Manx cultural engagement, open to all residents, now enables different forms of identity and identification – ethnic *and* cultural – on which both Island-born and settled *comeovers* can call, as appropriate.

For further information, see *Manx* entries in J T Koch, *Celtic Culture: A Historical Encyclopedia,* ABC-Clio (2006).